

International Intelligence

French activists demand end of sanctions on Iraq

A group of French opponents of the Gulf war called, at a press conference in Paris on May 27, for the instant lifting of U.N. sanctions against Iraq, to allow the country to rebuild crucial health and other infrastructure.

The group said they estimate the total number of war victims in Iraq at 100,000-150,000, of which one-third are civilians—mainly children, women, and the elderly.

The war critics, who include prominent figures like the retired Gaullist military figure Pierre Gallois, had been able to tour Iraq and see the destruction caused by the coalition's "precision" air attacks and the ensuing civil war. They also called for Western aid to Iraq, for the country's reconstruction.

Horn of Africa is being ripped apart

The United States has given its "tacit agreement" to an Ethiopia that will have two administrations, one Tigrey-dominated and one Eritrean-dominated, the London *Guardian* reported May 30, citing statements by a U.S. official to this effect.

Eritrea will set up its own provisional government and take no active part in a transitional administration for Ethiopia. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front said it will run the northern province of Ethiopia separately until a U.N.-supervised referendum on independence is held.

International commentators placed these developments in the context of the political and military aftermath of the war against Iraq.

"The Washington agenda for Ethiopia is quite simply part of Bush's new world order; it's neo-colonial," declared an African affairs specialist in London. "The indecent haste with which Washington has moved once [former Ethiopian President] Mengistu fled, while they did nothing for two years

but cynically let the famine and civil war reach the breaking point! . . . Our view is that Washington, with the consultation, of course, of London, aims to reestablish some form of military basing there in the wake of the Soviet disengagement of the past two years. This would give the U.S. military control over most of the Gulf region from Africa as well."

What the Horn of Africa is seeing is "a process of fragmentation," a BBC correspondent in the area commented on May 30. Earlier in the week, Northern Somalia had declared its independence, threatening the breakup of that country. This compounds the already-existing crisis in Sudan.

Ethiopia is one of the countries on the target list of a recently declassified 1974 U.S. National Security Council memorandum demanding population reduction, and it was Henry Kissinger and friends who sabotaged a mid-1970s plan that could have made Sudan the breadbasket for the entire region. That sabotage is a key causal factor in the current barbarism unfolding in the Horn of Africa.

Reunification of Korea is now on the agenda

The reunification of Korea is a real possibility, South Korean President Noh Tae Woo told a meeting of candidates on May 30, Radio Australia reported. President Noh called the North Korean government's decision to change its position on joining the U.N. a "radical change." He pointed out that German reunification had occurred very rapidly, and said that Korean reunification may likewise occur "at any moment."

The North Korean communist government of Kim Il-Sung announced that it would apply to join the United Nations simultaneously with South Korea. In a Foreign Ministry statement, the Pyongyang government said that it had "no alternative but to enter the United Nations at the present stage as a step to tide over such temporary difficulties created by the South Korean authorities."

The head of a North Korean studies insti-

tute in Seoul, Kim Chang-soon, noted: "This kind of statement is the first in national history. I think the North virtually conceded defeat to the South in the statement." It is known that Japan was encouraging North Korea to move in this direction, and it is thought that the People's Republic of China also had a role in this. As early as January, indications began to surface that North Korea was thinking increasingly of strong relations with Asian countries. The North has voiced support for Malaysia's economic bloc initiative—as has the South.

Both Koreas said they hoped U.N. membership would lead toward eventual unification of the peninsula. By applying for U.N. membership, North Korea is doing two things that it has avoided for four decades: It gives tacit recognition to the existence of the Seoul government as a legitimate governing body, and it deviates for the first time from its one-Korea policy. The one-Korea policy had maintained that there was only one Korean nation and that the government of Pyongyang was its rightful seat.

Bangladesh's problem is not its population

Bangladesh, which was recently devastated by a cyclone, is not suffering from its population growth but from the after-effects of British colonialism, the German Christian weekly *Rheinischer Merkur* wrote in its issue of May 21.

Denouncing those politicians and media that are speaking of Bangladesh's alleged "nuclear over-population bomb," the article says that once, Bengal was one of the culturally most developed and richest regions in the world. Bengali scientists invented the decimal system, on which all modern mathematics is based. That system was brought to the rest of the world 1,200 years ago by Arab scientists and merchants, who always spoke of "golden Bengal."

"The country has been exposed to impoverishment for the past 200 years," the article continues. "In 1765, the British East India

Company acquired the privilege of tax-collection from the local Mogul; there is no question that this launched one of the darkest periods of European colonial history. Bengal was plundered in a matter of a few decades, while London turned into the richest city of the world, thanks to the East Indian treasures. [Thus] England became the motherland of modern industrial capitalism.

"Bengal has not recovered from this exploitation to this date. That is why Bangladesh is the charnel-house of Asia." Not the lack of anti-birth programs, but the lack of investments in "hygienic measures, food programs for newborn children, job creation, and support of the elderly" is the real problem of Bangladesh, the article declares. The problem is not population growth, but the undersupply of food, in a region that has the same geological structure as the Netherlands and could be as rich, but has an underdeveloped infrastructure.

Algerian President declares state of siege

Algerian President Chadli Benjedid on June 5 declared a state of siege, dismissed the government, and postponed multi-party elections scheduled for later this month, following confrontations throughout the night between Algerian security forces and fundamentalists from the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) group, during which six people reportedly died.

During the day, troops and tanks patrolled the streets of the capital city of Algiers. Later, the FIS leadership, after having met in special emergency session, announced that they were suspending their protest actions.

While President Chadli may now have the upper hand against the fundamentalist destabilizers, the situation in Algeria is very tense. The FIS has been conducting increasingly riotous protest actions for nearly two weeks, denouncing the ruling FLN party and labeling Chadli an "assassin." The Algerian government has repeatedly denounced the FIS as being supported from

outside the country. Its funding is known to come from Saudi Arabia.

It is no accident that such events have been occurring after Algerian authorities warned that the country was at the top of the target list of the Bush administration and its "new world order" allies. Algeria was an outspoken opponent of the Gulf war, and its ruling party had sponsored an international conference, including participation of former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, French political leader Jacques Chirac, and others, denouncing the genocide and juridical violations committed by the United States during the war against Iraq.

Another factor is an apparent spillover of the fundamentalist unrest in Algeria into France. The past weeks have seen explosions in suburbs of French cities inhabited by immigrants from North Africa, which have, in part, been provoked by fundamentalist networks, although the poverty and miserable living conditions prevailing in these areas have also been a key factor.

Push for Japan to join Security Council

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is proposing that Japan become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* reported on May 31. Since the creation of the United Nations at the end of World War II, the "permanent five" have been the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and China.

At a news conference concluding a visit to Japan, Mulroney said: "If the U.N. Security Council . . . does not reflect the reality of the world as it is, not as it was 40 years ago or as it might appear to be in some people's eyes today . . . then people will find a way to circumvent that reality. So we believe that an economic superpower like Japan should be playing a progressively more important political role. We're going to encourage Japan to do that, and I suppose in the fullness of time the expression of its major role will be a much greater role in the United Nations."

● **THE ANGOLAN** government of President José Eduardo dos Santos, and the UNITA rebel forces led by Jonas Savimbi, signed a peace agreement in Lisbon, Portugal on May 31. An official cease-fire went into effect following the agreement. The deal ends a 16-year civil war. Under the terms of the agreement, the ruling "Marxist" government will open up the former colony to a "free market economy."

● **COMPUTER SYSTEMS** in the Chinese capital of Beijing have been struck by a "computer virus," in commemoration of the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989, UPI reports. "Remember June 4" keeps showing up on the screen. The government said it might have to shut down the system for several days to cure the disease.

● **A CUBAN** "nuclear scare" is being puffed up by the media, possibly setting the stage for a Bush administration intervention there. The *Wall Street Journal-Europe* of June 4 charged that Cuba is "stepping up its nuclear power program," and that there could be "weapons potential" in a Soviet-supplied reactor which is twice the size of the Iraqi reactor which the U.S. bombed.

● **FRENCH** aerospace experts and industrialists are attacking the Bush administration's arms control plan for the Mideast. The board of the biggest French aerospace firm, Aérospatiale, said the plan was merely intended to promote U.S. arms sales in the Middle East.

● **THE SOYUZ GROUP** of Soviet parliamentarians will send a delegation to Iraq in June, at the invitation of the Iraqi ambassador. Yuri Blokhin, a spokesman for the group, told the press that "the aim of the visit is a fact-finding trip to appraise the situation in Iraq after the war, to visit sites of recent battles and places where Kurds settle."